

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the TEAC Committee
May 13, 2010, 11:00-2:00 p.m.
SCORE Conference Room

In Attendance:

Tim Webb, Commissioner of Education
Susan Bodary, Education First
Katie Cour, Education First
Erin O'Hara, Governor's Office
Patty Kiddy, McNairy County School System
Pam East, Murfreesboro City Schools
Judy Stewart, Franklin County School System
Jill Levine, Hamilton County School System
Mike Edwards, Knoxville Chamber
Gary Nixon, State Board of Education
Tomeka Hart, Shelby County
Jesse Register, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Darrell Freeman, Davidson County
Jimmy Bailey, Arlington International Leadership
Magnet School
Kenny Lou Heaton, Carter County School System
John Barker, Memphis City Schools
Tequilla Banks, Memphis City Schools
Connie Atkins, Hamilton County Schools
Amanda Anderson, TDOE

Introductions:

Tim Webb welcomed members of the TEAC committee. He then introduced Susan Bodary and Katie Cour, from Education First Consulting, who facilitated the TEAC meeting.

Revised Structure and Plan:

Ms. Bodary briefly explained the history of Education First, their role in the crafting of Race to the Top and their work in Metro Nashville with Dr. Register.

Ed First's Role:

Ms. Bodary explained that Ed First's Role is to help things happen. Ed First will provide support for the decisions of the committee, facilitate conversations and support work overall. She then gave an overview of agenda and talked about outcomes. She asked committee members to think about what they want to base the system on, what their driving philosophy will be and how imperative it was to clarify term definitions, timelines, roles and responsibilities. To do this successfully, Ms. Bodary said that it was important to understand the work already underway in Memphis and Hamilton County, which John Barker (Memphis City Schools), Tequilla Banks (Memphis City Schools) and Connie Atkins (Hamilton County) were invited to present. Ms. Bodary stressed the need leverage local innovation moving forward (using Jesse Register and Tomeka Hart as resources) and the plan to bring local and national experts to future meetings.

Open Meetings Act/ Open Records Law

Amanda Anderson asked the group to be mindful of the Open Meetings Act (every meeting is open to the public and media, meetings can be recorded and reproduced), if more than two committee members meet outside of the committee, in any setting, and

deliberate on matters before the committee, they could be in violation unless publicly announced. She also briefed the committee on the Open Records Law, which states that emails and documents are public record and can be viewed and reproduced. And she requested all media queries be sent to her office.

Ms. Bodary then asked the group to sign a sheet for public record. She then notified the committee that Katie Cour and Ana Nettles will be sending out communications to the committee.

What is the purpose of the evaluation:

Ms. Bodary said that it is important to be discussing the evaluation not as a punitive tool but a way to inform how to better scaffold effective teaching practice throughout a teacher's career. She explained that this was the driving philosophy behind Race to the Top and the re-authorization of ESEA. She then asked the committee to describe what they needed to collectively consider and focus on?

Commissioner Webb wants the committee to look at basic definitions for growth data, the other 15% in the legislation, multiple measures, the other 50%, how this committee changes the culture of evaluation into a growth and development instrument, and how this process can be streamlined in order to fit within the given time and capacity constraints.

Mr. Edwards discussed the need for the evaluation to meet a lot of criteria in order to pass multiple litmus tests. He said that whatever the committee devises must be possible for principals to do, must meet all the criteria defined by the law and teachers must think it is fair. And before any work can be done, the committee needs to identify all the attributes necessary to complete this task. Finally, he stressed the importance of meeting everyone's expectations before deciding on components.

Ms. Levine thought that the committee's driving philosophy should be to come up with something that improves instruction and ensures high quality instruction for every student every year.

Mr. Freeman asked Ms Bodary and Commissioner Webb if this meeting was a "re-start." Mr. Webb said that it was technically a "re-start" but not completely; from the commissioner's standpoint this meeting represented a "partial re-construction." Mr. Freeman expressed some dissatisfaction with not being informed of the re-start and was concerned that the hours spent working prior to this meeting had been a waste. He wanted to be assured that this meeting would not be a rehash of the material they had already gone over. He then asked if Ed First had reviewed materials from the previous meetings.

Ms. Bodary clarified that Ed First had done an extensive review of all TEAC materials and expressed the need for a scaffolding approach at helping teachers succeed, ensure fairness, improves instruction, changes culture all streamlined into an ongoing

conversation, but within varying pieces of measurement (not just one test score). She then posed question how do you streamline and make system effective without stifling local innovation?

Mr. Freeman asked Susan to explain more about Ed First.

Ms. Bodary discussed Ed First in greater detail. She expounded on the individual backgrounds of each consultant, previous experiences- citing: Dr. Register, Seattle Public Schools, crafting many state's Race to the Top applications, Ms. Bodary's position as education advisor to Bob Taft (OH), Ms. Cour's work in the Tennessee Comptrollers Office, and both of their work with Achieve, etc. Explaining that Ed First sees its role as very similar to the roles they played in Tennessee Race to the Top Application process; stating that "Tennessee makes decisions for Tennessee," while Ed First does the underlying work, facilitates bringing forward best practice so that Tennessee can be successful. Erin O'Hara re-emphasized Ed First's role as facilitator and discussed the RFP process, with its requirement that the consultant had to have worked with teacher evaluation previously, and how that process resulted in the hiring of Education First.

Dr. Register shared concepts he felt were important: collaboration, a high level of trust between people who implement (Principals and Teachers), the need to be focused on best practice and stressed that any evaluation must be based on student achievement.

Mr. Edwards, in reference to Knox County, suggested that any approach decided on by the committee needs to have a "uniformity of application." He said that if system is going to be fair, it should be applied the same way throughout a district and ultimately the state, also mentioning training and follow-up as important components.

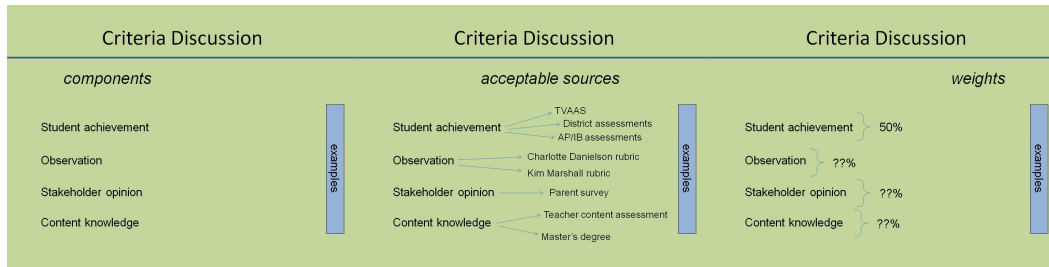
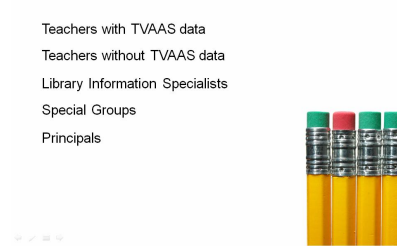
Ms. Levine suggested the committee streamline the process and make it tech savvy so that teachers and principals can access things easily, better, and faster.

Dr. Nixon encouraged the committee to develop a model that can be a default for systems not working independently while keeping the door open for systems that are already using an effective model. Also suggesting, the default model clearly state minimum standards and be the required basic framework with all alternatives requiring approval by the State Board of Education.

Categories of Educators for TEAC Work

Ms. Bodary described the five categories of educators for TEAC work: noting that central office staff is not included in the evaluation. She then discussed the TEAC glossary- specifically the definition for criteria (components, acceptable sources, weights). Both concepts are illustrated by the graphics below.

Categories of Educators



Criteria Discussion:

Ms. Bodary discussed a series of decisions regarding what is being evaluated and how the committee will have to decide other 15% not TVAAS, noting that teacher observation must be a component but does not have to be 50%.

Ms. East expressed her confusion; she thought that the other 50% had to be observation. She asked if there were certain criterion in the 50% that the committee needed to work around.

Ms. O'Hara, Ms. Ballard and MS Bodary read the law which stated that "other criteria can be personal conferences, observations, etc." Ms. Cour told the committee that "the components are not set in stone; you all will make those decisions"

Guidelines:

Ms. Bodary discussed processes, policies. She asked the group to think about the tension between fairness and local innovation. She also asked committee members to think about tools and what kind of guides educators will need to get have a streamlined system.

Evaluation Results Discussion:

Ms. Bodary explained how guidelines can flow from criteria. She asked the group how they were going to actually categorize teachers (effective, not effective, etc.) once a measure is in place that they believe is reliable.

Human Capital Discussions:

Ms. Bodary then explained what was outside of TEAC's responsibilities. She told the committee how important the evaluation will be at the district level when making human capital decisions, but stressed that the committee does not have the authority to tell districts what to do, only the authority to inform.

Mr. Edwards stated that this was unclear and posed a hypothetical scenario of a district that decides to take it as a guideline and only wants to do 20% of process. Ms. Cour explained that there is accountability, and that a district will get in trouble if they don't follow the process. Districts will have to either use the system that the committee creates or come up with and present a better one to be approved by the State Board.

Commissioner Webb again suggested a default model with the minimum standards developed by committee, while still acknowledging the potential for subjectivity in the 50% component.

Ms. Heaton commented that the evaluation needed to ensure that teachers are judged the same. She asked if there would be oversight to ensure the districts and teachers could not abuse the system.

Dr. Nixon noted that this should be a discussion of quality not quantity.

Dr. Register explained that any process is subject to human error and the only way to lessen the possibility for faulty results is to train administrators to conduct the process as correctly as possible.

Dr. Barker commented that variability exists across the system and stressed that it is this process that offers standardization.

Ms. Levine said that the system needs checks and balances through technology between counties and districts.

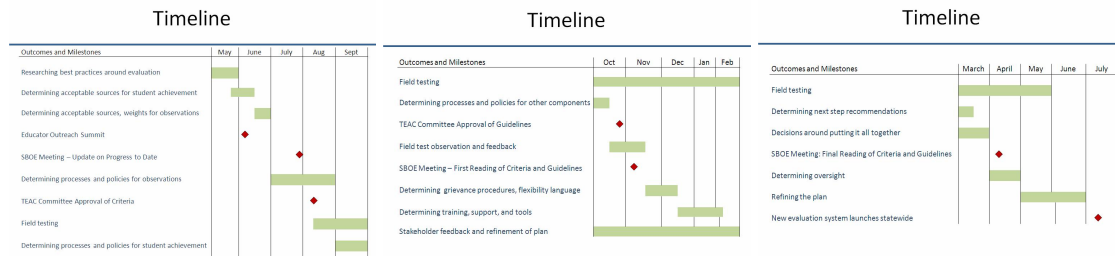
Ballard noted that the legal standard of inefficiency still must be met before a teacher can be dismissed, a measure that seeks to level the playing field.

Ms. Adkins commented that in Hamilton County- if you look at the value added data and compare that to the number of teachers getting satisfactory evaluations, there is a disconnect. They need to help principals figure out what is causing student achievement to be so low, while teacher satisfaction scores are high.

Putting it all Together:

Ms. Bodary summarized the decisions the group will have to make over the next few months, including the need for the committee to devise a grievance procedure. Ms. O'hara reviewed the "Roles and Responsibilities" slide, organization chart, and timeline

slide. She then informed the committee that each meeting will have a list of decision points that will be decided upon during that meeting. Ms. Bodary re-iterated the importance of some decisions being made before others, so that the appropriate items can be prepared for readings and decisions by the State Board. She cited Memphis City School’s process and timeline as an exemplar.



After a short lunch break the group returned to a brief discussion about choosing pilot schools, guidelines and Ms. Cour informed the committee of the upcoming May 27th meeting whose primary focus will be on acceptable sources for 35% student achievement.

Ms. East wanted to know which schools systems would be chosen for the pilot and Mr. Edwards suggested having a company audit review.

Mr. Nixon pointed out that teachers with and without TVAAS might have identical guidelines, a point many in the group agreed was possible.

At this point, Ms Bodary asked the group to share any concerns, thoughts, changes they wished to make in the decision sequence, etc. She then explained to the group that Ms. Cout would be reaching out to each individual member to become familiar with their backgrounds. Ms. Cour would also take that opportunity to inform them of the May 27th meeting agenda- which would largely focus on acceptable sources for the 35% student achievement criterion and what will be expected of committee members leading up to that meeting.

Mr. Bailey asked what the other subcommittees have done to date to ensure that all teachers will be evaluated in the same way.

Mr. Edwards asked what the “universe of measurements are.”

Ms. East expressed her desire for teachers to have “buy-in” and ownership. She told the group that as a member of the 15% subcommittee she feels that they have not done enough to ensure that teachers have a choice and that the evaluations are not a punitive tool. She shared that she is a big fan of Thinklink and has been in communication with the company’s regional head. She explained that this tool is

currently the most popular tool in use statewide and made claims for its validity, reliability and potential professional development benefits.

Ms. Bodary then asked the committee if they preferred to continue working in subcommittees or if they would rather have a broader structure, if allowed by statutes.

Ms. Kiddy said that before she could make a decision, she would need more information on K-2 assessment. While Mr. Edwards suggested a hybrid structure of subcommittees and the larger group to be most appropriate.

Measuring Teacher Effectiveness in Memphis City Schools:

Ms. Cour introduced: John Barker (MCS), Tequilla Banks (MCS) and Connie Atkins (Hamilton County) to the committee, to speak on their experiences tackling evaluation on the district level.

Mr. Barker began by giving the group his cell phone number: 901-487-6598. He then described the genesis of the Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC) program which was born out of a \$90M Gates Foundation investment in Memphis. In Memphis they are working with Mathematica data and Dr. Sanders' SAS institute's individual teacher effect data. Mr. Barker told the committee that results from that data show that three years with an ineffective teachers means that a student will not graduate. He then posed the rhetorical question: "how do you measure the art of teaching." He went on to show the committee how Memphis has broken down criteria for their evaluation- 35% Value-added, 35% Observation, 15% Teacher Knowledge, 15% Stakeholder Perception. He shared with the committee an anecdote illustrating the difficulty in principals judging content knowledge when an overwhelming majority of district principals could not even pass a basic 8th grade algebra test. Mr. Barker explained to the committee that Memphis is working with Mr. Ferguson at Harvard to develop the peers, parents and pupils stakeholder perceptions and that currently \$2M of the Gates grant money is being used right now on cameras in the classroom to observe teaching behavior.

Ms. Banks focused on "what drives teacher effectiveness," explaining that they use Mathematica data at the teacher level (because value-added is not available). She also said that the district has partnered with Teach for America because they provide good instruction and support for their teachers. Memphis has already administered TRIPOD for each student grades 3-8 and the next steps are to combine components and find out what is comparable when value-added is not available. She told the committee that right now, in Memphis, they have teacher work groups similar to TEAC assembling learning research and practitioner feedback to make thoughtful decisions.

Ms. Atkins told the committee that evaluations have to be connected to a broader view of performance management. She stressed recruiting (Better Teachers and Smarter Students) as a major priority, stating that traditionally – performance, management,

retention, culture and climate have been pushed forward as main priorities, with recruiting getting a back seat. She explained that the evaluation should be an honest discussion between supervisor and staff member where honest feedback and ongoing assessment are status quo. She then elaborated on Hamilton Counties use of the Marshall system rubrics and how established systems can be modified to meet a district's needs. Kim Marshall, in Hamilton County, is a 4 part framework: 10 mini observations (principal in the room with teacher and giving quick feedback), team curriculum and unit planning, interim assessment of work, yearend assessment. She explained that their steering committee plans to meet weekly to fine tune the rubrics and design the training for principals.

Ms. Cour opened the floor to the committee for questions.

Mr. Bailey asked the Memphis team to speak more about Mathmatica and Value-Added. He asked that they are doing for teachers who do not have TVAAS or praxis scores. He also asked the guests to comments on how they plan to evaluate principals. Mr. Barker admitted that value-added and non-tested subjects are a challenge, but said that if a questionnaire done by students can highly correlate w/VA then value-added might not be needed. He said that more testing is not necessarily the way to go and that smarter decisions need to be made about what matters and those components need to be used.

Ms. Levine asked "do you take it every year." To which, Ms. Banks responded that this summer is when they hope to figure that out and that in the future their professional development department will be driven by the results.

Dr. Nixon said that the Praxis only shows competence and does not show how far above competent test takers are. He believes that performance levels could inform. Ms. Banks followed those remarks by saying that, test takers need to be tested on content, diagnosis, and how they address the issue.

Ms. Steward asked how they deal with teachers who are popular with students and teachers, but not effective. Ms. Banks said that they are not asking students to make "emotionally-based" decisions, only fact/condition based questions.

Mr. Freeman asked what Memphis planned to do with teachers who do not perform.

Mr. Barker said train them to be better, give them support. He explained that up until this point they have not had the data to know who those teachers are and teachers haven't had the data to know what they need to improve. Ms. Stewart also emphasized this point.

Mr. Freeman said that in any other field one's performance is judged and that in those fields if your performance is lacking you are let go and in some cases a business might suggest other more appropriate employment. Mr. Barker responded by saying that if

you're looking at it from multiple perspectives and get different results, then the district should step in and give the teacher options (ie. PD, counseling, etc), stressing that emphasis should be placed on policy, not on value-added scores.

Mr. Edwards asked if a teacher can have good VA scores, but still not be teaching kids enough to graduate and succeed in college. He then said that the 15% should be looking at how well the kids are coming out with knowledge and skills that they are supposed to have and that the focus should be on end game, not progression. He used business as an example of how the committee should approach this. He said they need to look at performance expectations- businesses aren't looking at scores – they want to know who can do what, and that this evaluation needs a performance assessments.

Ms. Stewart said that high schools are offering courses that aren't necessary (ex. macramé). Mr. Barker said that by the ACT measures of college readiness, there is a notion that college ready looks like career ready – with the class of 2009, 6% of graduating seniors have met all benchmarks to be college ready (Memphis City Schools).

After a brief discussion on re-configuring subcommittee arrangements the group decided to move forward with ad hoc calls prior to group meetings. The group agreed to hold a 2 hour phone call Tuesday (5/22) to discuss growth components, non- TVAAS and other categories of educators. A member suggested future TEAC meetings take place over 2-3 days to ease the travel burdens of those coming from out of town.

Finally, Ms. Cour said that she would be sending out a copy of the presentation, information on work sessions for the following week and will be prepared to answer any questions.